

**Legislative Testimony**  
**HB 5630 AAC The Establishment Of Licensure For AN Advanced**  
**Practice Dental Hygiene Practitioner**  
**Public Health Committee**  
**Monday, March 16, 2009**  
**Larry Singer, D.D.S.**

To the Chairpersons and members of the Public Health Committee that are present, good day. I appear before this Hearing Committee to speak in opposition to Bill 5630, the purpose of which is purported to promote increased access to dental care to Connecticut's citizens in need.

I am Dr. Lawrence Singer, a practicing dentist from Wallingford. I have been licensed to practice dentistry in this state since 1963. I am a member of the American Dental Association, and the Connecticut State Dental Association, of which I am a Past President. The Connecticut State Dental Association was established in 1864, and for the past 145 years its members and other licensed dentists in this state have been serving the citizenry of this State with the best dental services that science and personal innovation permitted; while doing so in accordance with the highest ethical standards of the profession. The dentists in this state have been examined, both nationally and locally, and have been certified to provide dental services by a Dental Commission, that body was established in Connecticut in 1890. The dentist, throughout those years has always been the leader of the "dental team", and as such has rightly assumed responsibility for services rendered in his or her dental office while supervising those services that might be delegated to dental auxiliaries. The "dental team" is recognized as the most efficient format for the delivery of dental services.

Over-time, and through a dedication to the benefits of continuing education; the members of the dental team have become more proficient in their field of operation, and patient care has been the beneficiary. And while I personally feel that the advanced training of dental assistants, resulting in the increased efficiencies enjoyed by a more productive dental practice, would enhance the potential for the dental team to address the needs of more patients; I do not feel the same regarding the development of a new form of dental hygiene auxiliary. In fact, the continuity of the dental team would be destroyed, and if anything, the dental team would become less efficient.

Connecticut is fortunate in many ways. It has an educated workforce and population that, for many years have had supplemental insurance to assist in paying for dental care. Those without dental insurance have had access to various state and federally funded health care facilities. As the population has increased and the demand for services has increased, the dental profession and the Connecticut State Dental Association have pursued means to meet these challenges such as "school-based programs", pro-bono service provision, patient education forums, Mission of Mercy-type programs. Following a protracted lawsuit regarding Medicaid fees; the CSDA fostered a drive that has resulted in 700 dentists as participants in the HUSKY program where, before, only 180 had enrolled. An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner program and process is not necessary in Connecticut as the traditional "dental team" can and will address the dental care needs for our citizens, as it always has.

While the dental team, with the dentist at the lead, strives to meet the ever increasing demand for access to dental services, it is obvious that it cannot succeed alone or by itself. Increased access requires assistance from multiple sources. Assistance can come in a number of ways, one of which is decreasing the demand for emergency services by educating the public to the benefits of practicing prevention. One of the major benefits that the dental team provides is patient education. The dental team can reach out to more care recipients if those who qualify for needed services are covered by adequately funded entitlement programs.

I know that the dental team concept works. I have been a team leader for close to fifty years, and I hope to be able to continue for many more. With the advancement of the benefits of Evidence Based Dental practice, and an array of amazing dental materials and techniques, dental teams can continue to work on the shortfalls of Access. In my view, we cannot be expected to do it alone... particularly if the dental team is dismantled.

I respectfully suggest that the Committee reject Bill 5630

Lawrence J. Singer, DDS  
357 Hope Hill Road  
Wallingford, CT 06492  
203-265-0772